

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:174
ANSWERED ON:04.12.2006
ISSUE OF SPECIAL CARDS
Shivanna Shri M

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether the Union Government has directed the States to issue special green cards to the Below Poverty Line (BPL) families;
- (b) If so, the details thereof alongwith the criterion fixed for issuance of these special cards;
- (c) Whether BPL families owning a few consumer goods and small plots of land have also been excluded from this scheme ;
- (d) If so, the reasons therefor and the steps taken to include all the BPL families under the scheme ;
- (e) Whether most of the States have completed the work of issuance of special cards; and
- (f) If so, the details thereof ?

Answer

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR)

(a), (b), (c), (d), (e) & (f) : A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (f) OF THE STARRED QUESTION NO. 174 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 04.12.2006 IN THE LOK SABHA.

(a) : No orders for any specific colour cards for distribution to families identified under TPDS have been issued by the Government of India. The Targetted Public Distribution System (TPDS) with focus on the poor was introduced with effect from June 1997 and covers 6.52 crore Below Poverty Line (BPL) families including 2.50 crore Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families and 11.52 crore Above Poverty Line (APL) families based on poverty estimates of the Planning Commission for the year 1993-94 on the population projection of Registrar General of Census as on 31st March, 2000. Instructions have been given to issue distinctive ration cards to the identified families under APL, BPL and AAY categories. State Governments have the freedom to prescribe appropriate distinctive colours/ designs.

(b) : PDS is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and State Governments. The Central Government has taken the responsibility for procurement, storage, transportation and bulk allocation of foodgrains, etc. The responsibility for effectively distributing the same to the consumers through the network of Fair Price Shops (FPSs) lies with the State Governments. The operational responsibilities including allocation within the State, identification of families below poverty line, issue of ration cards, supervision and monitoring the functioning of FPSs rest with the State Governments. On the basis of the poverty estimation of the Planning Commission, the number of BPL families (including AAY) to be covered in each State/UT Administration has been conveyed to the State Governments and necessary guidelines for identification of AAY families have been sent to all the State Governments/UT Administrations as per Annexure-I.

The enclosed Annexure-II to the PDS (Control) Order, 2001 gives detailed guidelines for identification of BPL and AAY families.

(c)&(d):As per the last BPL census for the 10th Plan conducted by the Ministry of Rural Development, the methodology of score based ranking of each household indicating their quality of life was adopted. For this purpose, 13 socio-economic parameters which include size of land holding, type of house, food security, sanitation, etc. were adopted. These were ranked in order, on the basis of which BPL families were identified.

(e) & (f): Most of the State Governments except Himachal Pradesh have completed the work of identifying and issuing distinctive ration cards to the BPL families. Marginal shortfall in issue of BPL cards is there in Bihar, Goa, Uttar Pradesh, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Lakshadweep(Annexure-III). Out of the 2.50 crore families which were to be identified under AAY category, various States/UT Administrations have identified 2.25 crore AAY families and distinctive ration cards have been issued to them. The Central Government is allocating foodgrains to 2.25 crore AAY families as per the approved norms. A Statement showing the number of AAY families identified by the States/UT Administration is enclosed as Annexure III. For identification of the remaining AAY families (0.25 crore), concerned States/UT Administrations have been directed to expedite the process.

ANNEXURE-I

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (b) OF THE STARRED QUESTION NO.174 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 04.12.2006 IN THE LOK SABHA ANTYODAYA ANNA YOJANA (AAY)

(i) A National Sample Survey Exercise points towards the fact that about 5% of the total population in the country sleeps without two square meals a day. This section of the population can be called as 'hungry'. In order to make TPDS more focused and targeted towards this category of population, the 'Antyodaya Anna Yojana' (AAY) was launched in December, 2000 for one crore poorest of the poor families.

(ii) AAY contemplates identification of one crore poorest of the poor families from amongst the BPL families covered under TPDS within the States and providing them foodgrains at a highly subsidized rate of Rs.2/- per kg. for wheat and Rs.3/- per kg for rice. The States/UTs are required to bear the distribution cost, including margin to dealers and retailers as well as the transportation cost. Thus the entire food subsidy is being passed on to the consumers under the scheme.

(iii) The scale of issue that was initially 25 kg. per family per month has been increased to 35 kg. per family per month with effect from 1st April, 2002.

FIRST EXPANSION OF AAY

The AAY Scheme has been expanded in 2003-2004 by adding another 50 lakh households from amongst the BPL families.

(a) Households headed by widows or terminally ill persons or disabled persons or persons aged 60 years or more with no assured means of subsistence or societal support.

(b) Widows or terminally ill persons or disabled persons or persons aged 60 years or more or single women or single men with no family or societal support or assured means of subsistence.

(c) All primitive tribal households.

SECOND EXPANSION OF AAY

As announced in the Union Budget 2004-05, the scheme has been further expanded with effect from 1st August, 2004 by another 50 lakh BPL families by including, inter-alia, all households at the risk of hunger. The guidelines have been issued to all States/UTs on 3rd August, 2004. The following criteria was adopted for identification of additional Antyodaya families:-

(a) Landless agriculture labourers, marginal farmers, rural artisans/craftsmen such as potters, tanners, weavers, blacksmiths, carpenters, slum dwellers, and persons earning their livelihood on daily basis in the informal sector like porters, coolies, rickshaw pullers, hand cart pullers, fruit and flower sellers, snake charmers, rag pickers, cobblers, destitutes and other similar categories in both rural and urban areas.

(b) Households headed by widows or terminally ill persons/disabled persons/persons aged 60 years or more with no assured means of subsistence or societal support.

(c) Widows or terminally ill persons or disabled persons or persons aged 60 years or more or single women or single men with no family or societal support or assured means of subsistence.

(d) All primitive tribal households.

Out of the 50 lakh households in the 2nd expansion, 48 lakh BPL households have been distributed state wise and the remaining 2 lakh households to be identified subsequently by the States where error of exclusion come to light.

THIRD EXPANSION OF AAY

As announced in the Union Budget 2005-06, the AAY has further been expanded w.e.f. 1st April, 2005 to cover another 50 lakh BPL households thus increasing its coverage to 2.5 crore households. Earlier criteria adopted for identification of Antyodaya families was followed in this expansion. With this increase more than 38% of the total estimated BPL families have been covered under AAY.

IDENTIFICATION OF FAMILIES AND ALLOCATION OF FOODGRAINS

(i) The identification of the Antyodaya families and issuing of distinctive Ration Cards to these families is the responsibility of the concerned State Governments. Detailed guidelines were issued to the States/UTs for identification of the Antyodaya families under the AAY and additional Antyodaya families under the expanded AAY. Allocation of foodgrains under the scheme is being made to the States/UTs on the basis of issue of distinctive AAY Ration Cards to the identified families.

(ii) The status of identification of households under AAY (Normal, 1st expansion, 2nd expansion and 3rd expansion) is given in Appendix. The defaulting States/UTs are reminded regularly as a part of monitoring.

ANNEXURE-II

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (b) OF THE STARRED QUESTION NO.174 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 4TH DECEMBER, 2006 IN THE LOK SABHA

PDS Control Order, 2001

Identification of families living below the poverty line :

(i) State Governments shall formulate suitable guidelines for the purpose of identification of families living Below the Poverty Line (BPL), including the Antyodaya families, as per the estimates adopted by the Central Government. Care will be taken to ensure that the families so identified are really the poorest. The exercise of identification of BPL and Antyodaya families, wherever it has not been done already, shall be completed within three months of the issue of this Order.

(ii) State Governments shall get the lists of BPL and Antyodaya families reviewed every year for the purpose of deletion of ineligible families and inclusion of eligible families.

(iii) While undertaking the exercise of identification or review of BPL and Antyodaya families, each State Government shall prescribe a suitable proforma to be filled up by or on behalf of the head of a family.

(iv) The data provided in the prescribed proforma shall be verified by the authority designated by the State Government for the purpose. The said authority shall also certify the correctness of the information contained in the proforma.

(v) Gram Sabha shall finalise the list of beneficiaries belonging to BPL and Antyodaya categories drawn up by the designated authority in respect of the area under their respective jurisdiction.

(vi) Where there are no Gram Sabhas, the local representative bodies shall finalise the list of beneficiaries belonging to BPL and Antyodaya categories within their respective jurisdiction.

(vii) The designated authority of the State Government or the local representative bodies including Gram Sabhas and Gram Panchayats which have been entrusted with the task of identification of beneficiaries, shall verify and certify the information in the prescribed proforma for BPL and Antyodaya families.